

# READERS **respond**

## POLL RESULTS

### Are Digital Portfolios a Realistic Alternative to Standardized Testing?

Poll takers and those who commented were evenly divided on this issue

#### If We Had the Time

If as much time and effort were put into creating authentic student portfolios as is put into prepping students for standardized tests we would get to see what our students are really capable of.

*Sarah Salem  
Park Hill High School  
Kansas City, Missouri*

#### There Is No Question

As a genuine way to demonstrate student learning, there is no question that digital portfolios are a realistic alternative to standardized testing. The only question is this: Are we truly interested in personalizing learning or are we more interested in comparing students and measuring schools?

*Justin Hardman  
Hong Kong International School*

#### They Don't Compare

Digital portfolios are all the rage; unfortunately, they are no substitute for standardized testing. Standardized testing was developed as an answer to calls for an objective, norm-referenced measure of student achievement. I do not believe that we can create such a consistent, comparative measure using digital student portfolios.

*Lenora Calvert  
New Way Learning Academy  
Scottsdale, Arizona*

#### Portfolios Are Far Better

With so much focus on teaching different minds, learning styles, and abilities, isn't it our job to teach children to be lifelong learners? Standard-

ized testing won't do that. It is time that students collect, reflect, share, and set their own learning goals while teachers facilitate the process.

*Regina Cockerill  
TASIS The American School in England  
Thorpe, Surrey*

#### Cost Is the Problem

Digital portfolios are not a realistic alternative, primarily because of cost. In my class, students are required to compile their "best work" in a portfolio. It takes more than an hour to grade each student from monitoring to final evaluation. Standardized tests require less time and are easier to grade.

*Chris Champion  
PAECT  
Hershey, Pennsylvania*

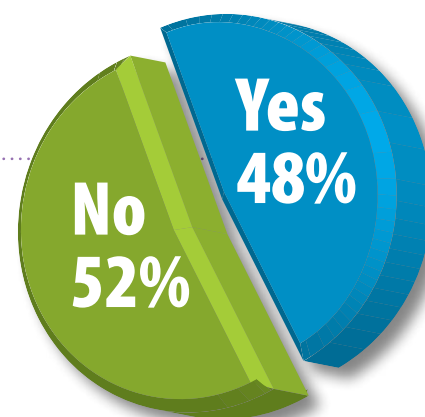
#### Portfolios Complete the Picture

There is no alternative to standardized testing. It assesses a narrow swatch of information with a limited view of intelligence. A Web link to a rich digital portfolio along with SAT scores gives colleges a more complete picture of an individual.

*Norman Gwaltney  
The Project School  
Indianapolis, Indiana*

#### Look At the Research

This debate is another version of the question: Which is better research, qualitative or quantitative? Digital portfolios and standardized testing each contribute to what we know about a student's performance. Rather than focusing on either/or, how do we



harness the best attributes of each, in order to develop a deeper understanding of student performance?

*Dave Edyburn  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*

## LETTERS

#### Teach With Conviction

In the May Point/Counterpoint column, "Do Students Respect Intellectual Property?" I do not believe the responses answered the question, but they did point out the importance of teaching about an issue. Tammy Morris spoke of the lack of interest on the part of other teachers as well as students. Morris does point out the importance of modeling and teaching about an issue. On the other hand, Jennifer Janescko wrote how she did teach her students about copyright laws as well as holding training for teachers in her building. With her students she also reminded them over and over to ask for permission, expecting them to follow the law, even if they may never get caught. The difference here is not in the attitude of our students, but in the convictions of a teacher, her persistence in teaching how and why to get permission and expecting her students to do the right thing. That is what teaching is about.

*Bob Pettapiece  
Wayne State University  
Detroit, Michigan*